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Summary

Newsletter

In this issue:

2006 Victorian Census recruitment launch
Changes to ABS@vicgov
Victorian Statistical Advisory Forum meeting
National data network and Victorian community indicators
Census analysis conference, Canberra, 18-19 July 2006
Victorian tourism
Australian Year Book, 2006
Wine and grape industry
Economic indicators
Regional population growth
Demography, Victoria
Schools
National health survey
Corrective services
Criminal courts
Taxation revenue
Capital expenditure
Wage and salary earners in regions
Labour force characteristics of Aboriginals
Average weekly earnings
Employee earnings, benefits and trade union membership
House price indexes
Agricultural survey, apples and pears
Value of principal agricultural commodities
Business use of information technology
Building approvals
Construction work done
Sales of new motor vehicles
Industry classification
Information development plan for rural and regional statistics
ICT satellite account
Other selected releases
ABS statistical training
Points of contact

What's happening in Victoria

2006 Victorian Census recruitment launch

ABS has been working to ensure all Victorians are fully informed about the 8 August 2006 Census of Population and Housing, and its implications for Victorian communities. ABS has been liaising with Government agencies and community organisations, to raise awareness of both the questionnaire's content and use of data obtained.

On February 15, Governor of Victoria, John Landy, A.C., M.B.E., launched the 2006 Victorian Census Recruitment Campaign at Melbourne Museum. The event was well supported by key service providers, community organisations and departmental representatives. It provided a great kick start to the recruitment drive, which attracted in excess of 5000 applicants for 800 Area Supervisor positions. Launch guests also heard from Vince Lazzaro (ABS Regional Director), Professor Ian Anderson (Director, Centre for Health and Society and Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Unit), and George Lekakis (Chair of Victorian Multicultural Commission). The latter two speakers highlighted the Census's empowering aspect, and links between positive community outcomes and community involvement in the Census process.

On 22 February, ABS teamed up with the Victorian Multicultural Commission to consult with the multicultural and multi-faith community. The evening provided an important opportunity for people to discuss questions included on the Census form, use of Census data, and services available to assist individual communities to accurately complete their form. ABS has also been working closely with groups/agencies; including the Council to Homeless Persons, Dept of Human Services, Dept for Victorian Communities and Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria. These relationships provide important feedback to guide ABS in achieving an accurate and successful Census, with minimal inconvenience to community members.

As the main event approaches, ABS begins recruitment of 6,200 people to deliver Census forms to every household in Victoria. Census collectors, with their bright yellow satchels, will become a familiar sight around Victoria in the weeks leading up to Census Night. Collectors are generally people who have a few hours free on evenings and weekends, and an interest in ensuring that every home in their local community is counted. Further information on the process is available in 'How Australia Takes a Census, 2006' (Cat no 2903.0).

For information about Census Collector jobs, log on to <www.abs.gov.au/recruitment> or phone 1300 (CENSUS) 236 787.

[Back to top](#)

Changes to ABS@vicgov and ABS@ Victorian local government services

'ABS@vicgov' is a service provided by ABS to Victorian State Government staff. It provides ready access to the full range of ABS standard products and services. The service also includes a 'Container' into which are loaded customised data purchased from ABS, or Victorian Government datasets, for sharing across government. Prior to 27/1/06, this service was delivered by Department of Infrastructure (DOI) replicating nightly the contents from ABS to the DOI-supported site, which was then provided through the Victorian Government intranet.

Since 27/1/06, due to ABS IT environment changes and an ABS website upgrade, the delivery method changed so that ABS@vicgov is now hosted by ABS and accessed via the internet. The new ABS@vicgov homepage allows you to either search the Container for required information, or access the full range of ABS products and services freely available from the ABS website.

The links within Central Station, and all departmental intranet sites, have been updated to reflect the new address (<www.abs.gov.au/abs@vicgov>). If you created your own bookmarks to the previous service, they will no longer work and should be replaced. When you click on the ABS@vicgov link in either Central Station or on your departmental intranet page, you should have automatic access to the ABS@vicgov site. If you are prompted for a username and password, then the automatic authentication has not been set up correctly for you. If this occurs, please email <robert.letheby@abs.gov.au> to advise.

Information sessions on the new internet-based ABS@vicgov service were conducted in late February. Any work groups unable to attend the sessions, who would benefit from having someone explain how to use/navigate the new service, can arrange a session by contacting Heather Burns (<heather.burns@abs.gov.au>).

The 'ABS@Victorian local government' service for councils provided by Dept for Victorian Communities (on DOI's Extranet) has been discontinued, now that this service's content is available free on the ABS website (<www.abs.gov.au>). Free ABS website content includes all ABS publications from 1998 onwards, time series spreadsheets, data cubes, 2001 Community Profile series and SEIFA 2001. If your Council would like to arrange an ABS website information session, please contact Heather Burns <heather.burns@abs.gov.au>.

Contact Robert Letheby on Melbourne (03) 9615 7423 or email <robert.letheby@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

Victorian Statistical Advisory Forum meeting of 9 March 2006

The March meeting of the Victorian Statistical Advisory Forum (VSAF) included informative presentations on three varied topics. The first, by Jeremy Reynolds of Department of Sustainability and Environment, discussed population projections for Victoria including issues regarding the production and use of these figures. The need to update projections is driven by a number of reasons, including the release of *A Plan for Melbourne's Growth Areas* (affecting land available for residential development on Melbourne's fringe) and recent changes to net overseas migration, fertility rates and mortality rates. It was noted that there has been increasing use of population estimates and projections for a range of planning purposes, and understanding population growth is important for funding and resource allocation purposes. Demand is becoming more specialised in nature, with increasing focus on projections for non-standard geographic areas and involving alternative assumptions. However there is sometimes confusion surrounding the use of these figures, especially the difference between estimates and projections. Increasing consultation and communication is necessary to help ensure that projections are validated and used wisely in decision making. VSAF discussed a number of issues raised in the presentation, including the need for consistent versions of projections and having one credible source. A small working group has been established to progress these issues.

The Chief Information Officer (CIO) of Victoria, Ms Jane Treadwell, provided a detailed overview of her office's role and the strategic purpose for its establishment. Information and communication technology investments applied at the whole-of-government level can enable seamless and integrated service delivery, enhance operational performance, increase policy development capability and community engagement. Ms Treadwell discussed a number of significant achievements to date, together with current initiatives. These range from assessing the ability to share information sources across the Victorian Public Service to being involved in development of Directions Plus, a world-first new mobile technology used at the 2006 Commonwealth Games to provide people with immediate directions and maps to various services. Office of the CIO also has an important role to play in providing information support for place-based management, by providing a whole-of-

government view of services within each of the eight regions and across Victoria.

Professor John Wiseman, gave an overview of the Victorian Community Indicators Project (VCIP); including the purpose and rationale for establishing the project, key stakeholders involved, what the project aims to deliver and its contribution to Victorian Government policy objectives. He also outlined issues that need to be addressed at the project's present stage, and support required from State Government to progress the project. He welcomed the support of VSAF and invited members to provide feedback.

In addition to presentations, VSAF discussed follow-up opportunities for influencing statistical priorities tabled at the State Statistical Forum's February meeting, as these have potential to feed into the national statistical program. Members were also requested to consider proposals for statistical work the ABS Victorian office could undertake in order to support key state statistical priorities. VSAF agreed that these should be considered in a whole-of-government context, with a view to longer term priorities.

Contact Antonella Caruso on Melbourne (03) 9615 7860 or email <antonella.caruso@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

National Data Network may prove valuable to Victorian Community Indicators work

The National Data Network (NDN) is a cooperative venture of predominantly government organisations ranging from information agencies, like ABS, to service providing agencies such as Department of Human Services. It involves the development of an electronically distributed set of data contributed regularly by member agencies; along with tools and services to assist research, analysis and data management. The NDN has moved into a developmental phase through 2006 and is working towards full scale operation next year.

The NDN has substantial potential to bring into the public realm a wide range of privacy-protected summary data from administrative sources in particular. and promote extensive data exchange at summary level. One key area which may substantially benefit in Victoria is the Victorian Community Indicators (VCI) work. VCI aims to bring into operation a set of measures that will help communities and government better understand the situation at local level in economic, social, environmental and democratic dimensions across Victoria. The task of developing indicators and harnessing data to support them is well underway, led by a project team based at Victoria and Swinburne Universities. ABS has been playing an active role in this work. Data for the indicators will come from Census and regular surveys, conducted by ABS and others, and from a new special Community Survey.

Much indicator data will also be derived from administrative data. The NDN may well prove to be the best available vehicle through which data can be collected, analysed, confidentialised (where required) and disseminated to the Victorian community. A Central Custodian Node of the NDN could be based at the proposed VCI centre at Melbourne University, and reports and analysis distributed from there. Where it is necessary to provide VCI data to a specified set of users within a secure environment, NDN has that adaptable capacity.

For further information: Eric Morris, NDN Business Office, ABS Canberra on (02) 6252 7332 or email <eric.morris@abs.gov.au>; Neil McLean, VCI, ABS Victoria on Melbourne (03) 9615 7463 or email <neil.mclean@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

ABS hosts Census Analysis Conference, Canberra, 18-19 July 2006

This conference provides an opportunity for potential users of Census data to discuss the

analytical and research capabilities of Census data, and new initiatives affecting Census 2006. It will also influence ABS' Census output program, particularly those components which support research use.

Guest speakers include:

- Professor Peter McDonald, Professor of Demography and Program Head, Australian National University
- Professor Graeme Hugo, Professor of Geography, Director of the National Centre for Social Applications of GIS, University of Adelaide
- Dr Bob Birrell, Director - Centre of Population and Urban Research, Monash University
- Professor Ann Harding, Director - National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling
- Dr Natalie Jackson, Director - Demographic Analytical Services Unit, University of Tasmania
- Chris Chamberlain, Associate Professor, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, RMIT University
- David Mackenzie, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University

Other experienced researchers will present papers, plus there will be a number of Census sessions presented by a panel of ABS Census experts to answer questions.

Call for papers. The broad themes for this year's conference are demographic, social and economic statistics; and ABS is now calling on experienced researchers and analysts to speak about their research and experience with Census data. Papers do not need to be original or unpublished, just relevant to research using Census data. If you would like your paper considered for presentation please email title and abstract to <victoria.allen@abs.gov.au>.

Attendance at the conference; including morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea; is being provided free by ABS. The conference dinner on 18 July is costed at \$50 per person (excluding drinks), and needs to be prepaid with registration.

Date: Monday 17 July (Cocktail Reception and Registration, 7:00–9:00), Tuesday 18 (Conference sessions, 9:00–5:00), Tuesday 18 July (Conference dinner, 7:00 start), Wednesday 19 July (Conference, 9:00–5:00).

Venue: Rydges Lakeside Hotel, Canberra City.

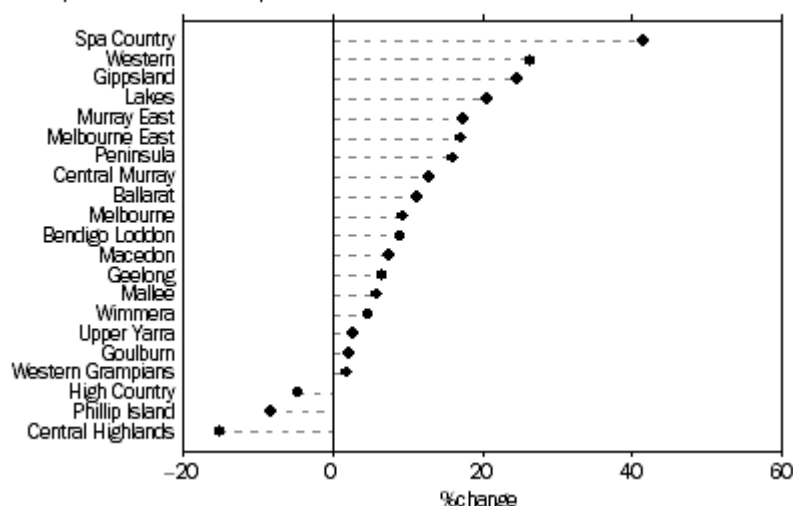
Please register your interest with Victoria Allen on Canberra (02) 6252 5200 or email <victoria.allen@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

Victorian Tourism

In September qtr 2005, total takings from tourist accommodation in Victoria were approximately \$273.3 mil, an increase of 8.9% over September qtr 2004. Although the Melbourne Tourism Region accounted for the majority of Victoria's accommodation takings (75.9%), the highest annual growth in accommodation takings between September qtr 2004 and September qtr 2005 occurred in Spa Country (41.5%), followed by Western (26.3%) and Gippsland (24.6%) Tourism Regions. Over the same period, some tourism regions experienced decreases: Central Highlands Region saw the largest fall in takings (15.2%), followed by Phillip Island (8.4%) and High Country (4.7%).

TAKINGS FROM ACCOMMODATION, Percent Change
—September 2004 to September 2005



For these and other statistics on Victorian social, economic and environmental indicators see 'State and Regional Indicators, Victoria' (cat. no. 1367.2). Contact Christine Sergi on Melbourne (03) 9615 7695 or email <c.sergi@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

Selected recent releases

1301.0 Australian Year Book, 2006. Released 20/1/2006.

A comprehensive general reference work, which includes topics on: population; labour, income and welfare; housing; health; education; crime and justice; culture and recreation; environment; agriculture; forestry and fishing; mining; energy; manufacturing; construction; service industries; tourism; transport; communications; science and technology; the financial system; government finance; prices; national and international accounts; Australia's geography and climate; government; international relations and defence.

Contact the National Information and Referral Service (NIRS) at 1300 135 070 or email <client.services@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

1329.0. Australian Wine and Grape Industry, 2005. Released 25/1/2006.

In 2005, Victoria had 35,215 hectares of irrigated grapevines. Average Australian water usage was 3.76 megalitres per hectare; with Victoria averaging 5.10 megalitres. Victoria had 23.5% of all Australian winemaking locations and accounted for 14.8% of grapes crushed. Topics include: wine consumption, grape and wine prices, international trade, domestic wine sales, brandy and grape spirit, wine inventories and world comparisons.

Contact Damian Sparkes on Adelaide (08) 8237 7425 or email <damian.sparkes@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

1350.0 Australian Economic Indicators, March 2006. Released 31/3/2006.

A monthly compendium of economic statistics. It contains: national accounts, international accounts, consumption and investment, production, prices, labour force and demography, incomes and labour costs, financial markets, state and international comparisons. Most editions also contain feature articles.

Contact Ms Jo Jackson on Canberra (02) 6252 6114 or email <jo.jackson@abs.gov.au>.

3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2004-05. Released 23/2/2006.

Victoria's population increased by 59,400 people in 2004–05, the second largest increase of the states/territories, for an annual growth rate of 1.2%. Victoria's natural increase (29,400 people) in 2004–05 was the highest recorded for Victoria since 1994–95, while net interstate migration continued to be negative (-2,400 people). Net overseas migration contributed 32,300 people to Victoria.

Melbourne SD recorded the largest growth of capital cities in 2004–05, increasing by 41,300 people. Melbourne SD held 3.6 mil people, and the rest of Victoria 1.4 mil in 2005. Melbourne SD averaged 790 people per week increase. The fringe LGAs of Wyndham (C) and Casey (C) increased by an annual 7,877 (7.3%) and 7,376 (3.5%) people, respectively. Melbourne (C) gained 3,451 people (5.6%). The Victorian LGAs of Bass Coast (S)(967 people, 3.4%) and Greater Geelong (C)(2,675, 1.3%) continued strong growth. Stonnington (C) lost 422 people (-0.5%). Australia's fourth most densely populated SLA was Port Phillip (C) - St. Kilda with 5,600 people per square kilometre.

Contact Andrew Howe on Adelaide (08) 8237 7370 or email andrew.howe@abs.gov.au.

[Back to top](#)

3311.2.55.001 Demography, Victoria, 2004 Final. Released 15/2/2006.

Covers population change; including births, deaths and migration. Marriage, divorce, estimated resident population and various demographic rates are also presented. In 2004, there were 61,300 confinements resulting in 62,400 live births in Victoria, 2% higher than in 2003 (61,100 births). There were 32,500 deaths in Victoria, or a standardised death rate of 6.0 deaths per 1,000 population; below the national rate of 6.3. The final issue of this electronic product. It is intended that future Victorian data will be available in spreadsheet format with releases of relevant annual national publications, and available free on <www.abs.gov.au>. More recent data are released quarterly in Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0).

Contact Ken Willis on Melbourne (03) 9615 7392 or email <ken.willis@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

4221.0 Schools, Australia, 2005. Released 23/2/2006.

During 2005, there were 2,305 schools in Victoria, comprised of: independent (9.0 %), Catholic (21.0 %) and government (70.0%). After excluding special schools, there were 1,653 primary schools, 362 secondary schools and 195 combined primary/secondary. These schools accommodated 829,771 students, of whom 3,824 (0.5%) were part-time. School participation rates for Victorian students were: 16 year olds (89.3%), 17 year olds (78.0%) and 18 year olds (21.4%).

Contact Leo Stinson on Canberra (02) 6252 7793 or email <leo.stinson@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

4364.0 National Health Survey: Summary of Results, 2004-05. Released 27/2/2006.

Statistics about long-term illnesses experienced by respondents, mental well-being, injuries, consultations with doctors and other health professionals; and health risk factors including alcohol consumption, smoking, exercise, body mass and dietary practices. In 2004–05, although most Australians reported good or better health, 77% reported one or more long term medical conditions. The most commonly reported were: eyesight (52% of population),

hayfever and allergic rhinitis (16%), arthritis (15%), back and disc disorders (15%). Other commonly reported conditions were hypertensive disease (11%), asthma (10%) and hearing loss (10%). Almost half (49%) of adults reported they walked for exercise in the two weeks prior to interview, 36% did some form of moderate exercise and 15% did vigorous exercise. Alcohol was consumed by 71% of males and 54% of females in the week prior to interview. Some 18% of people reported long term conditions of the circulatory system. Three tables present considerable state level data. See also 'National Health Survey: Summary of Results; State Tables, 2004-05' (Cat. no. 4362.0).

Contact Jane Griffin-Warwicke on Canberra (02) 6252 6535 or email <jane.griffin-warwicke@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

4512.0 Corrective Services, December Quarter 2005. Released 23/3/2006.

For Dec qtr 2005, there were 79,370 persons nationally under the authority of corrective services (excluding those in periodic detention). There was a daily average 24,184 full-time prisoners in Australia, an increase of 2% on Dec qtr 2004. The average daily national imprisonment rate was 155 prisoners per 100,000 adult population, and males were 14 times more likely to be in prison than females. There were 5,662 Indigenous adult prisoners in full-time custody.

There were 55,197 persons in community-based corrections in Australia, an increase of 6% (3,275 persons) since Dec qtr 2004. Of this figure, 9,365 (21%) persons were serving parole orders following imprisonment. Males were almost five times more likely to be in community based corrections than females. State and territory data is also freely available through the ABS website.

Contact Nick Skondreas on Melbourne (03) 9615 7375 or email <crime.justice@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

4513.0 - Criminal Courts, Australia, 2004-05. Released 25/1/2006.

Statistics relating to the criminal jurisdiction of Higher (Supreme and Intermediate) and Magistrates' Courts across Australia. Statistics describe the characteristics of defendants, including offences and sentences. In Victoria during 2004-05, there were 2,307 defendants adjudicated in Higher Courts and 83,114 defendants in Magistrates' Courts. Of defendants proven guilty in Victorian Higher Courts, 82% received custodial orders, and 16% non-custodial orders. Of defendants proven guilty in Victorian Magistrates' Courts, 13% received custodial orders, and 86% non-custodial orders.

Contact Nick Skondreas on Melbourne (03) 9615 7375 or email <crime.justice@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

5506.0 Taxation Revenue, Australia, 2004-05. Released 29/03/2006.

This publication contains statistics of taxation revenue collected by all levels of government in Australia for the period 1999-2000 to 2004-05. Total taxation revenue collected in Australia rose \$21,266 million or 8.3%, between 2003-04 and 2004-05. Taxes on income increased by \$17,265 million, and taxes on provision of goods and services increased \$2,939 million.

National state government taxation revenue [including taxes from other levels of government

and on public corporations; but excluding GST revenue, which is recorded in GFS as a grant from Commonwealth to states] increased 3.1% from 2003-04 to \$41,648 million in 2004-05. Taxes on property were the single largest taxation revenue source (38.5%) for state governments in 2004-05, followed by employers' payroll taxes at 28.8%.

National local government taxation revenue increased 6.2% from 2003-04 to \$8,146 million in 2004-05. Taxes on property are the sole source of taxation revenue for local government.

In 2004-05, income taxes levied on individuals represented 40.3% of total taxation revenue for all levels of government, GST revenue 12.7%, and excises and levies 8.2%. On average, Australian residents each paid \$13,781 in tax, up 7.0% on the previous year. Commonwealth Government per capita taxation rose by 8.1% from 2003-04 to \$11,336 in 2004-05. Victorian state and local government per capita taxation rose 2.6% from 2003-04 to \$2,520 in 2004-05.

Contact Jonathon Sim on Canberra (02) 6252 5735 or email <jonathan.sim@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

5625.0 Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia, December 2005. Released 23/2/2006.

Australian total capital expenditure (trend estimate) increased 5.9% in Dec qtr 2005. It rose 9.2% in seasonally adjusted terms, after a 3.5% rise in Sept qtr 2005. A strong increase in seasonally adjusted expenditure on equipment, plant and machinery (9.9%) has been the major source of growth this quarter, mainly driven by other selected industries and mining. Seasonally adjusted buildings and structures increased (6.6%), mainly driven by mining. In Dec qtr 2005, actual capital expenditure (current price) in Victoria increased 17.6% to \$4,021 mil: mining expenditure grew 53.9% to \$497 mil, manufacturing grew 7.5% to \$985 mil, and other selected industries rose 16.5% to \$2,538 mil. This publication contains 6 tables with state level data.

Contact Esther Lauw on Sydney (02) 9268 4357 or email <esther.lauw@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

6261.0.55.001 Characteristics of Wage and Salary Earners in Regions of Australia, 2002-03. Released 22/2/2006.

Characteristics of employees living in urban, regional and remote parts of Australia; with insights about employment activity, occupation and wage and salary income across age and occupation groups. Data was compiled from the Australian Taxation Office's Individual Income Tax Return Database. In 2002-03, most of Australia's wage and salary earners resided in Major Cities (69.7%) and Inner Regional (18.9%) areas. Outer Regional areas accounted for 9.3%, while Remote and Very Remote areas comprised 2.1% of wage and salary earners. In New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, approximately 75% of wage and salary earners resided in Major Cities. The 2002-03 median annual income for wage and salary earners was estimated at \$32,698, a 3.9% increase over 2001-02 (\$31,483). Two tables present limited state level data. Data on the underlying wage and salary earners series used in this publication are released in Cat. no. 5673.0.55.003, with the majority of data items available at statistical local area level.

Contact Kirsten Hastwell on Adelaide (08) 8237 7369 or email <kirsten.hastwell@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

6287.0 Labour Force Characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, Experimental Estimates from the Labour Force Survey, 2002 to 2004.

Released 25/1/2006.

Monthly Labour Force Survey data have been pooled to produce annual estimates; classified by sex, age, state/territory, and remoteness. During 2004, there were 18,800 Indigenous Victorians aged 15 years and over: 7,500 were employed, 2,300 unemployed, and 9,000 not in the labour force. An unemployment rate of 23.5% is estimated. One table occurs at Victoria level.

Contact Craig Blair on Canberra (02) 6252 5967 or email <craig.blair@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

6302.0 Average Weekly Earnings, Australia, November 2005. Released 23/2/2006.

Australian full-time adult ordinary time earnings (trend series) rose by 5.5% for males and 5.2% for females in the 12 months to November 2005. In November 2005, average weekly ordinary time earnings for full-time adult employees was \$1,029.50 (trend). Several tables contain state level data.

Contact Manpreet Singh on Perth (08) 9360 5304 or email <manpreet.singh@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

6310.0 Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership, Australia, Aug 2005. Released 28/03/2006.

This publication presents information about the weekly earnings and employment benefits received by employees, and their trade union membership. In August 2005, there were a total of 8,526,600 employees in Australia: 6,945,000 (81%) private sector and 1,581,600 (19%) public sector. The mean weekly earnings of employees in all jobs was \$807, an increase of \$41 (or 5%) since August 2004. Mean weekly earnings in all jobs was highest in the Australian Capital Territory (\$912) and lowest in Tasmania (\$697).

For full-time employees, the mean weekly earnings in main job was \$979, while for part-time employees it was \$366 in their main job. Mean weekly earnings in main job were \$1047 for full-time male employees and \$854 for full-time female employees. Some 73% (or 6,244,400) of employees were entitled to either paid holiday leave or paid sick leave, or both, in their main job.

In August 2005, median weekly earnings (in main job) were highest in the:

- Mining industry (\$1380)
- Managers and administrators occupation group (\$1200)
- 45-54 year age group (\$950).

In August 2005, 1,911,900 employees were trade union members in conjunction with their main job, a 4% increase on August 2004. While the number of trade union member employees increased, the proportion of employees who were trade union members remained relatively stable between August 2004 (22.7%) and August 2005 (22.4%). The proportion of trade union memberships has decreased from 33% in August 1995, a fall of one-third over the past decade. Contains several tables with state level content.

Contact Labour Market Section on Canberra (02) 6252 7206.

[Back to top](#)

6416.0 House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities, December 2005. Released 24/2/2006.

Established house prices in Melbourne rose 2.3% in Dec qtr 2005, to be 2.9% higher than a year earlier (Dec qtr '04). Darwin (23.2%) and Perth (22.5%) made large gains in the past

year, while Sydney prices declined 3.9%.

Contact Mark King on Canberra (02) 6252 5342 or email <mark.king@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

7121.0.55.002 Agricultural Survey, Apples and Pears, Australia, 2004-05. Released 17/2/2006.

Final 2004-05 estimates show apple tree numbers increased 2% in the year to 10.8 mil. Increases in tree numbers were reported in the main growing state of Victoria and in South Australia, offset by falls in other states. Total trees reported in Victoria increased 7% to 3.8 mil; while in New South Wales, the second main growing state, they fell 2% to 2.0 mil. Pear trees increased 4% to 2.1 mil. A 5% increase in trees numbers in Victoria, which is by far the largest pear grower with 1.7 mil trees (81% of national total), and a smaller increase in Tasmania were partly offset by falls in all other states

Contact John Moody in Hobart on (03) 6222 5867 or email <john.moody@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

7501.0 Value of Principal Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, Preliminary, 2004-05. Released 3/2/2006.

Preliminary gross value of production for principal agricultural commodities for all states/territories and Australia. Final estimates will be released in September 2006. In 2004-05, preliminary gross value of Australian agricultural commodities fell by \$1.3 billion (4%) to \$35.6 billion. While the gross value of livestock slaughterings and other disposals and livestock products both increased, these were more than offset by a significant reduction in gross value of crops. The preliminary estimate for gross value of crops decreased 13% to \$17.8 billion, livestock slaughterings and other disposals rose 10% to \$12.0 billion, and livestock products increased 3% to \$5.7 billion.

Contact Geoff Ellerton on Hobart (03) 6222 5856 or email <geoff.ellerton@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

8129.0 Business Use of Information Technology, 2004-05. Released 17/3/2006.

After little change for four years, the proportion of Australian businesses using a computer (89%) increased by 4 percentage points during year ended June 2005. The proportion of businesses with Internet use (77%) and web presence (27%) grew steadily. Businesses with broadband as their main Internet connection grew strongly from 41% at June 2004 to 63% at June 2005. During 2004-05, 33% of businesses reported placing orders via the Internet, and Internet income grew 19% to \$39.6 billion.

Contact Peta Hart on Perth (08) 9360 5303 or email <peta.hart@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

8731.0 Building Approvals, Australia, January 2006. Released 2/3/2006

Private sector houses approved nationally fell 1.0% (trend) in January 2006, with falls in New South Wales (-4.8%), Queensland (-1.8%) and Victoria (-0.2%); but rising in Western Australia (+0.5%) and South Australia (+0.1%). Total dwelling units approved in Victoria fell 0.1% in Jan 2006. The trend estimate for private sector houses and total dwelling units approved in Victoria has fallen for the past eight months.

Victoria had 2,949 dwelling units approved in Jan 2006 (trend), compared with 3,324 units in Jan 2005; an 11.3% drop. The introduction of new Victorian environmental standards last

year, and a State Government grant reduction at Dec 2005 (potentially causing "a pull forward" in activity) may have influenced the market.

Contact Paul Pamment on Adelaide (08) 8237 7499 or email <paul.pamment@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

8755.0 Construction Work Done, Australia, Preliminary, December 2005. Released 22/2/2006.

During Dec qtr 2005 in Victoria, \$5.7 bil (chain volume measure) worth of construction work was done: \$3.9 bil of building work, and \$1.8 bil of engineering work. Dec qtr 2005 building work done was down 6.7% on Sept qtr 2005, while engineering work done increased 20.3%. Total Victorian dwellings approved but not commenced fell from 4,749 in Sept qtr 2005 to 4,091 dwellings in Dec qtr 2005; with Dec qtr 2005 26.5% below Dec qtr 2004 (5,569 dwellings). In trend terms, Victorian construction work done has grown for the last five quarters. This publication has multiple state level tables.

Contact Paul Pamment on Adelaide (08) 8237 7499 or email <paul.pamment@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

9314.0 Sales of New Motor Vehicles, Australia (Electronic Publication), January 2006. Released 21/2/2006.

Monthly information on new motor vehicle sales in each state/territory, using data sourced from the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries. Previously unreported sales for Jan 2005 to Aug 2005 have now been included, and revised data is presented. Nationally, the Jan 2006 trend estimate for total new motor vehicle sales (81,839) increased 0.2% in the month. This is the first month since February 2005 in which the trend estimate increased. Compared with Jan 2005, sales of passenger vehicles (-1.5%) and sports utility vehicles (-6.2%) decreased, while other vehicles increased (2.7%). This publication contains state level data.

Contact David W Taylor in Brisbane on (07) 3222 6180 or email <d.taylor@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

Information papers and classifications

1292.0 2006 Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification. Released 28/2/2006.

The 2006 Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) has been developed for use in the compilation and analysis of industry statistics in Australia and New Zealand. ABS and Statistics NZ jointly developed this classification to improve industry statistic comparability between the two countries, and with the rest of the world. This 2006 edition replaces the 1993 edition, which was the first version produced. Prior to this, Australia and New Zealand had separate industry classifications. ANZSIC 2006 reflects extensive consultation with internal and external users, and alignment with the upcoming revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC, Revision 4). It consequently provides a more contemporary and internationally comparable industrial classification system.

ANZSIC 2006 is available on the ABS Web site <www.abs.gov.au>. Support tools such as the class change table, index of primary activities, hierarchical structure and correspondence are also available here. A new feature is the search function on the ABS Web site. Users can now type in keywords and a list of possible ANZSIC codes with activity description will be displayed. The ANZSIC Coder on CD-ROM is available through bookshops, the National Information and Referral Service, or ordered on-line through the

ABS Web site. External users who need to install the ANZSIC Coder (Cat. no. 1292.0.30.001) on their local area network can use this product, which was released on 29/3/06. It enables a user to identify the correct ANZSIC code for an economic activity.

For more information, contact the National Information and Referral Service (NIRS) at 1300 135 070 or email <client.services@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

1362.0 Information Paper: Regional Research in Australia - the Statistical Dimension: an Information Development Plan for Rural and Regional Statistics, 2005. Released 11/1/2006.

This publication sets statistical development recommendations to expand future availability and relevance of rural and regional statistics in Australia. It presents a detailed overview of associated concepts, issues and themes; with particular focus on the nature and extent of current statistical demand. Through investigation of existing survey and administrative data sources, it highlights specific gaps in the currently available suite of rural and regional information, and proposes a plan to address significant gaps. Recommendations will be implemented collaboratively by ABS and other key producers of rural and regional data over the next 3 to 5 years.

Contact Andrea Woods on Adelaide (08) 8237 7368 or email <andrea.woods@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

5259.0 Australian National Accounts: Information and Communication Technology Satellite Account, 2002-03. Released 7/3/2006.

There is considerable interest in the role of ICT as a significant driver of socioeconomic development; for example, in the way that ICT has allowed businesses to increase productivity. For official statisticians, the measurement of these technologies provides significant conceptual and measurement challenges. A key part of ABS's response to these challenges has been the development of an ICT satellite account for 2002-03 Australia. An ICT satellite account involves the identification of ICT products and activities within the national accounting framework so that a comprehensive and coherent set of economic data on ICT supply and use can be produced.

Contact Peter Comisari on Canberra (02) 6252 5381 or email <peter.comisari@abs.gov.au>.

[Back to top](#)

Other selected releases

1209.0.30.001 Mesh Blocks (Draft) Digital Boundaries, Australia, 2005. Released 17/3/2006.

1351.0.55.011 Research Paper: Testing the Reliability of a Measure of Aboriginal Children's Mental Health, Mar 2006. Released 2/3/2006.

1352.0.55.0656 Research Paper: Methodology for Producing Synthetic Microdata for Income in Non-survey Years (Methodology Advisory Committee), Nov 2004. Released 23/3/2006.

1352.0.55.070 Research Paper: Estimation Methodologies Using Taxation Data for ABS Business Surveys (Methodology Advisory Committee), Jun 2005. Released 16/2/2006.

1352.0.55.072 Research Paper: A Review of Confidentiality Protections for Statistical Tables (Methodology Advisory Committee), Jun 2005. Released 16/2/2006.

1352.0.55.075 Research Paper: Imputation in Longitudinal Surveys, the Case of HILDA (Methodology Advisory Committee), Nov 2005. Released 23/3/2006.

3107.0.55.003 Information Paper: Improved Methods for Estimating Net Overseas Migration, 2006. Released 10/2/2006.

3303.0 Causes of Death, Australia, 2004. Released 14/3/2006.

3309.0 Suicides, Australia, 1994 to 2004. Released 14/3/2006.

3412.0 Migration, Australia, 2004-05. Released 29/03/2006.

4130.0.55.001 Housing Occupancy and Costs, Australia, 2003-2004. Released 13/3/2004.

4363.0.55.002 National Health Survey and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2004/5: Data Reference Package, 2004-05. Released 1/2/2006.

4915.0.55.001 Discussion Paper: Arts and Cultural Heritage in Australia - Key Issues for an Information Development Plan, Mar 2006. Released 14/3/2006.

5512.0 Government Finance Statistics, Australia, 2004-05. Released 29/03/2006.

5518.0.55.001 Government Finance Statistics, Education, Australia, Electronic Delivery, 2004-05. Released 29/03/2006.

5673.0.55.003 Regional Wage and Salary Earner Statistics, Australia - Data Cubes, 2002-03 (Reissue). Released 22/2/2006.

6238.0 Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia, Aug 2004 to Jun 2005. Released 6/2/2006.

6239.0 Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia, Aug 2004 to Jun 2005. Released 6/2/2006.

6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Feb 2006. Released 16/3/2006.

8635.2.55.001 Tourist Accommodation, Small Area Data, Victoria - Electronic Delivery, Sep 2005. Released 10/1/2006.

Main Economic Indicators (MEI's). Also released during the past quarter were a number of monthly and quarterly MEIs which can be accessed from the ABS website home page <www.abs.gov.au>. Examples of MEIs include: housing finance, labour force, consumer price index and retail trade.

Free ABS publications online. From 1 July 2005, all ABS electronic publications (both PDF and HTML based content) published from 1998 onwards, along with electronic "publication tables" in spreadsheet or data-cube format, are available free from the ABS website <www.abs.gov.au>. Printed copies still carry a price, but most products are available electronically.

[Back to top](#)

ABS STATISTICAL TRAINING

Each ABS office offers practical, informative and relevant training to help you develop your statistical skills. This training is primarily targeted to public sector bodies.

What courses are available at ABS Victoria in 2006?

- Turning Data Into Information
- Making Quality Informed Decisions
- Basic Survey Design
- Basic Statistical Analysis

Turning Data Into Information (TDII)

This course develops skills in interpreting, displaying and communicating data clearly and effectively. Analytical thinking skills are developed to enable the transformation of data into meaningful written information.

Course Length: 2 Days

Course Fee: \$550.00

Course Dates: 5 & 6 April and 2 & 3 August

Making Quality Informed Decisions (MQID)

This course introduces the concept of 'wholistic quality' through the use of data quality framework for a statistical collection. The framework ensures that users of statistics are able to assess whether the statistics are fit for their intended use. This course aims to provide a framework to evaluate the quality of available data sources and use this knowledge in the decision-making process.

Course Length: 1 Day

Course Fee: \$325.00

Course Dates: 9 May and 18 October

Basic Survey Design (BSD)

This course aims to provide a broad overview of all facets of survey development. Topics include developing survey objectives, advantages and disadvantages of various collection methodologies, questionnaire design, data processing, reporting of results and management of design process.

Course Length: 2 Days

Course Fee: \$550.00

Course Dates: 22 & 23 June and 28 & 29 November

Basic Survey Analysis (BSA)

This computer based course develops practical skills in summarising and displaying survey data in graphic and tabular form. It provides the tools for finding simple relationships in survey data and testing for statistically significant differences in past and current survey results.

Course Length: 2 Days

Course Fee: \$550.00

Course Date: 5 & 6 September

For further information regarding statistical training, nominations and bookings; or to discuss your specific training needs, please contact Maxine McDermott on (03) 9615 7080 or email <vic.coordination@abs.gov.au>

[Back to top](#)

POINTS OF CONTACT

Victorian Statistics Advisory Forum (VSAF)

VSAF is a major forum for statistical liaison between Victorian Government Agencies and ABS. The following group of departmental representatives meet 3 times each year.

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[Back to top](#)

About this release

Statistics Victoria is a quarterly newsletter primarily targetted to Victorian state and local government users providing information about new developments, recent statistical releases, seminars, training and reviews.

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